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ably the rather clever observation was made on some other occasion, held in reserve and worked in as soon a favorable opportunity presented itself.

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Studies in English Syntax. By C. ALPHONSO SMITH . . . Boston: Ginn & Co., [1906]. 8vo, pp. 92.

Of the three studies contained in this book the first two have been published before,¹ but are now revised and augmented. The third, entitled 'The Position of Words as a Factor in English Syntax,' appears now for the first time. In originality and suggestiveness it is a fitting counterpart to the first two in continuing the author's method of interpreting syntax. His point of view may be inferred from his confession in the preface, that since he regards syntax as "the autobiography of language, he believes more in weighing than in counting, and less in tabulation than in correlation."

In the first chapter Dr. Smith, with abundant wealth of illustration, fortifies his conviction that "there are literary effects both subtle and far-reaching that find expression in none of the tradi-

throughout conceived in a vein of caricature. To show that the "Osterode Dream" (Elster III, 21-23) is also not to be looked upon as an actuality, it is only necessary to call attention to its symbolic value: the Göttingen *studiosus juris*, turning aside from the "Tollhauslärm" of legal quibbles, takes sanctuary with the god and goddess that typify eternal beauty, i. e., once more views the world through the eyes of a poet. The typical character of the close of this dream may be brought out by comparing it with the *Nachwort zum Romanzero*, Elster I, 487: Nur mit Mühe schleppte ich mich bis zum Louvre, und ich brach fast zusammen, als ich in den erhabenen Saal trat, wo die hochgebenedeite Göttin der Schönheit, Unsere liebe Frau von Milo, auf ihrem Postamente steht. Zu ihren Füßen lag ich lange und ich weinte so heftig, dass sich dessen ein Stein erbarmen musste. Auch schaute die Göttin mitleidig auf mich herab, doch zugleich so trostlos als wollte sie sagen: siehst du denn nicht, dass ich keine Arme habe und also nicht helfen kann?

¹ Chapter I, on 'Interpretative Syntax,' appeared originally in *Pub. of the Mod. Lang. Ass'n of America*, xv; chapter II, on 'The Short Circuit in English Syntax,' was published in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xix.

tional canons of rhetoric or literary criticism, but in the phenomena of syntax and of syntax alone." Aptness in illustration proves of good service when, after interpreting what he calls 'the syntax of omission,' he proceeds to distinguish in terms of syntax between imagination and fancy, asserting that imagination is shown in a writer's choice of subjects and predicates, fancy in his choice of adjectives and adverbs. Plausibility is given to this seemingly far-fetched theory by appealing to Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne, and Shakespeare, who corroborate it in their unconscious practise. The significance of this deduction is realized only when its application to English literature is made in this suggestive generalization: "The difference between the literature of Elizabeth's reign and the literature produced by the Caroline and Metaphysical poets who followed, is that in the first a full and splendid stream of imaginative thought flows from subject to predicate; in the second this current is diverted and dissipated among adjectives and adverbs: what should have been tributaries have become bayous, and drain rather than swell the central flow."

It is in the second chapter on 'The Short Circuit in English Syntax' that one, while admitting in the main the justness of Dr. Smith's reasoning, feels prompted to differ with him on points of detail. For instance, he writes (p. 33): "Take, for example, the clumsy periphrastic tenses, *I am studying, I was studying, I shall be studying*, instead of the older and more compact *I study, I studied, I shall study*. The difference in meaning hardly seems to justify the existence of the periphrastic forms." On the contrary, this very difference is a valuable asset of the English in comparison with other modern languages. The gain in definiteness caused by the choice between *He dines at the hotel* and *He is dining at the hotel* is sufficient justification for the existence of both. After all the strictures laid upon Professor Münch, one feels that his contention that the English more than any other language tends toward definiteness, brevity, and directness is a useful induction and a valuable comment on the characteristics of English-speaking people. It is true that the importance of Professor Münch's citations is not to be estimated by their number, yet they gain in value because of their variety.

Dr. Smith's development of his fundamental thesis that syntactical relations do not span wide spaces in English is thoroughgoing and conclusive. His constructively cumulative method again leads him to adduce numerous corroborative citations, happily chosen from a wide range of English literature. In the paragraph on the influence of distance on the concord of subject and predicate in such Northern phrases as *ye mak and bindis*, Dr. Smith concludes with the felicitous conceit, "The *is* ending is the alimony that the pronoun demands of the predicate for maintenance during separation." However in this very phrase the alimony of the *is* ending is demanded and obtained not by the masculine subject but by the feminine predicate.

In the third chapter the author traces the genesis of the so-called 'retained object,' *I was given a book*, from the passive *Mē was gegiefen ān bōc* (= 'To me was given a book'), in which the Old English pronominal dative retained the pre-verbal position of the active voice. "Thus *Me*," he writes, "by retaining its position in front of the verb, came to be the first word in the sentence; that is, it occupied the normal position of the subject. Once in the initial position the dative could not resist the subjectifying influences of its environment." By recalling such analogies as the relation of *I think to methinks*, Dr. Smith establishes historically a justification of this 'preposterous locution,' *I was given a book*, which, he points out, is included in the 'Don't' column of many of our best journals. The 'subjectifying influence of the pre-verbal position' is further shown by *Who did you see?* now the usual construction in colloquial English.

After considering the 'objectifying influence of the post-verbal position,' illustrated by *Woe is me* for the older *I am wo* and *Shall's* (= *Shall us*) instead of *Shall we*, Dr. Smith advances to the explanation of the idiom, *It is me*. He discovers four stages of evolution: (1) *Ic hit eom* (to 1300 A. D.); (2) *It am I* (1300 to 1400); (3) *It is I* (1400 to 1500); (4) *It is me* (1500 to 1600). Rejecting the theory of Lounsbury that this last stage is due to an imitation of the French *c'est moi*; of Einkenel that emphasis has caused the predominance of *It is me* over *It is I*; of Jespersen that similarity in sound with *we, ye, he, she*,

caused the use of the accusative *me, thee*; Dr. Smith rightly sees in the choice of *me* a testimony to the objectifying influence of the post-verbal position. In this explanation he is in accord with the last view of Sweet (*New English Grammar*, § 1085), which is quoted in a footnote: "When a pronoun follows a verb, it generally stands in the objective relation; hence, on the analogy of *He saw me, Tell me*, etc., the literary *It is I* is made into *It is me* in the spoken language."

The introduction to the third chapter contains several trenchant illustrations of popular errors in construing English syntax. The line in the hymn, 'The Banner of the Cross' (p. 63), should read 'For Christ count everything but *loss*' instead of *lost*, a mistake repeated two lines below.

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A POSSIBLE LOWELL ORIGIN.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—The first two stanzas of one of Lowell's best-known poems, *In the Twilight*, have a remarkable parallel in a passage in *The Story of Ali Nouredin and the Frank King's Daughter* in *The Thousand and One Nights*, tr. Payne, vol. VIII, pp. 63–80. There are few traces of oriental influence in Lowell, if by the oriental we mean the sensuous, though he has treated several oriental subjects. It is impossible to trace between these two passages any very convincing similarity of phrase, but the similarity of thought is, it will be seen, very marked. I recall that there are a few other passages in various authors where this same idea is touched upon, but nowhere, so far as I know, has it been so elaborately developed as in the two passages here compared. I italicise the passages most similar.

In the Twilight.

Men say the sullen instrument
That, from the Master's bow,
With songs of joy or woe,